



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 1321.0 - Small Business in Australia, 1997

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### Small business continues to grow - ABS

Small businesses have increased in number by 56 per cent to almost 900,000 for the period between 1983-84 and 1996-97, according to results released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics

Between 1983-84 and 1996-97 the number of small businesses with employees increased by 71 per cent (or 4.2 per cent per annum) to 491,000 and non employing businesses increased by 41 per cent (or 2.6 per cent per annum) to 409,000. Total small business employment increased by 50 per cent, or 3.2 per cent per annum, to 3.2 million.

Across the States and Territories, the average annual growth rate in the number of small businesses over the 13 years to 1996-97 was highest in Western Australia (4.9 per cent) and Queensland (4.6 per cent), while New South Wales (2.9 per cent) and the Northern Territory (2.6 per cent) recorded the lowest growth rate.

Over more recent years (the three years 1993-94 to 1996-97) the overall growth in small business has been slowing slightly (3.3 per cent per annum) in comparison to the average rate recorded over the longer period (3.5 per cent). This was mainly due to the decline in the number of non-employing businesses, falling 4.2 per cent over the three years to 1996-97 (-1.4 per cent per annum). Over the same three years, small employing businesses increased by 26 per cent (8 per cent per annum).

During this period, small business employment grew at 3.6 per cent per year, slightly above the long term average of 3.2 per cent with the number of employees of small businesses growing at 5.3 per cent per year and the number of persons working in their own unicorporated businesses recording slight declines.

New information on business exit rates shows that businesses exited the business population at the rate of 7.6 per cent on average over the two years 1994-95 and 1995-96. This total exit rate was made up of 6.0 per cent cessations and 1.6 per cent changes in ownership.

Full details, plus information on the characteristics of small businesses and their operators, analysis of growth in small business and profiles of selected industries are in **Small Business in Australia 1997** (cat. no. 1321.0) available in all ABS bookshops. A summary of its findings are available from this site.

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